

# FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND  
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## FOREWORD

SEVERAL articles in this issue show new approaches to familiar problems of fundamental education. The two French contributions reflect a concern for technical training; and this is not linked solely to conditions where industrialization exists or may be possible. The 'rural artisans' of Tunisia play a considerable part in raising the productivity of their countryside. Both the experiments described here attempt to bridge the gap between illiteracy or lack of elementary education and the training needed by skilled artisans. In the case of Tunisia the attempt has become more than a temporary expedient: steady progress since the time of Senat's pioneer school shows that a complete system of technical education, based on local needs and resources, is in the process of being worked out.

A number of interesting researches are in progress in the Philippines. One of them seeks to find an equation between adult literacy and primary schooling. This is a crucial question, since in the last analysis only two lines of action are open to fundamental educators—develop the schools and start campaigns of adult education. We tend to regard the former course as normal, the latter as an emergency measure. But the interaction between the two groups, children and adults, is such that many States are accepting responsibility for the double programme, and treat adult education as a continuous process, not simply a campaign. Where this is the case, a division of budget must be made between the schools and the adults; and the problem is raised: what is a minimum of primary schooling required to ensure permanent literacy for the next generation? Many factors are involved besides schooling—the availability of reading matter, its usefulness, and so on. But the exploratory studies in the Philippines go some way towards solving the problem. A number of other countries are directing research to similar goals, and Unesco would like to receive more detailed information from the organizers.

To give some focus to the contents of the next issues of *Fundamental Education*, the October issue will deal with experiments in mobility ('taking education to the people') and the following one with the rôle of libraries.



# AN EXPERIMENT IN SOCIAL EDUCATION

## LABOUR WEEK IN KASHMIR SCHOOLS

by K. G. SAIYIDAIN

### INTRODUCTION

MANY attempts have been made in recent years, with varying degrees of success, to give a new orientation to education, particularly with the object of bringing it nearer to life and breaking down the academic exclusiveness in which the school is apt to lose its main *raison d'être* and purpose. One such attempt was made in the State of Jammu and Kashmir during the years 1939-1945. The report of this interesting and valuable experiment, published in Kashmir for the information of local educational workers, aroused considerable interest at the time. I therefore republished it recently on behalf of the Bombay Educational Department so as to bring it to the notice of a larger circle of readers. As the Education Clearing House of Unesco wished to bring the experiment to the notice of an international audience, I accepted the proposal readily and am glad to write these introductory remarks specially for the revised version of the original report.

I feel strongly that, not only in this country but in the whole world, we have to make an earnest and concentrated effort to give a new orientation to the social ideology of our children and youth, particularly in the direction of inculcating a sense of the dignity of labour and cultivating the capacity to work together for constructive and socially worthy causes. I cannot think of any better method of doing so than by bringing all school children together into a fellowship of work and service where the 'meanest' work will be undertaken in a spirit of adventure and comradeship because it is useful and provides a healthy outlet for their energies and talents. This is, I believe, the idea underlying the approach adopted by that excellent organization 'The International Voluntary Service for Peace'. Of course, it is not suggested that the programme we worked out can, or need be, followed in its entirety in all schools, as conditions differ greatly from country to country and the merit of such an experiment lies precisely in the planning and spontaneity which it evokes in the teachers and pupils of every school. They can study their special needs and circumstances as well as the conditions of the environment and then decide what types of work can be undertaken usefully. It is necessary however, that the programme drawn up should fulfil the following conditions:

1. It should provide for real labour and manual work, suited to the ages of the children, so that they may actually achieve something worth while at the end of the week.
2. It should lend itself to co-operative activity so that children may work in groups and thus learn, through practice, the habits of discipline and qualities of leadership.
3. It should be varied and carefully planned so that the tens of thousands of children participating in it may all find something worth while to do and waste of time—merely 'playing' at work—is avoided. This will be facilitated if the programme includes work inside the school as well as outside—community sanitation, help in field operations, hospital visiting, constructional activities etc.
4. In order to exploit the educational possibilities of this Labour Week project



attempts should be made to link up the work done with the school academic programme, thereby vitalizing reading, writing, arithmetic and other subjects.

I know that in many countries a great deal of similar work has been done —on a much bigger scale and better organized, than has been possible in India. This account is published mainly with the object of acquainting educational workers in other countries with how one modest project was carried out under rather difficult conditions and the measure of success that attended our efforts.

#### THE BACKGROUND OF THE EXPERIMENT

During the years 1938-45, I had the opportunity of working as the Director of Education in the State of Jammu and Kashmir which has (unfortunately) been in the political limelight during the last three years. I was charged with the responsibility of reorganizing the educational system of the State and, thanks to a number of earnest and capable teachers and colleagues and a helpful administration, a fair measure of success was achieved in this project. My object in this brief report is to give an account of our rather interesting and educationally significant experiment which was tried in all the State Schools during this period. The later developments that have taken place in the educational field, and the newer trends that have come into prominence since, give this experiment a deeper significance than I could have anticipated for it at the time.

This educational reorganization that we undertook aimed not only at the improvement of the curriculum, the methods and the technique of education but also at inculcating a new social and moral ideology in the boys and girls at school. One of the most serious and universal complaints against the present system of education in India has been that it tends to create a gap between the world in school and the world outside the school, to alienate the educated classes from the rest of the people and to instil in some of them a sense of social snobbery which makes them look down upon manual labour as somehow

Students building huts for poor villagers.





beneath their dignity and regard all manual labourers as belonging to an inferior class of human beings. There is a good deal of truth in this criticism and this unfortunate situation not only corrupted the mentality of the educated classes but also made education somewhat superficial, unreal and confined to textbooks and the teaching of academic subjects.

We discussed this situation from all points of view and worked out several schemes—including a revision of the Social Studies syllabus, the introduction of an 'activity period' in all classes, the encouragement of craft work etc.,—which may give a more dynamic orientation to school education. Amongst the schemes discussed was one for the celebration annually of a 'Labour Week' in schools, during which all children will be relieved of the ordinary school work and take up various kinds of manual work and social service in and outside the school and thus 'learn through doing' the lesson of social service and honourable toil. After considering all aspects of the proposal, we decided to give it a trial and for six years, i.e. beginning in 1939 when it was first tried, this 'Labour Week' continued to be a regular feature of school education in the State.

In deciding to celebrate such a week in all the primary and secondary schools of the State, we had before us the objective of giving a new orientation to the children's minds on the social and moral value of manual work and providing for them varied opportunities of active social service on behalf of their own schools and the local community. Many of the educational workers whom we consulted were convinced that a large majority of children would respond joyously to such a project, as it would enable them to exercise their creative and constructive powers and to labour together on behalf of common causes and purposes. It was, however, doubtful whether the parents and the general public would welcome a movement which might strike the unimaginative outsider as an unnecessary waste of time, as taking students away from their books to a type of work which could as well be left to labourers, coolies, masons and scavengers. But we felt that the attempt was worth making and this significant experiment in educating the social conscience of the students could not be abandoned merely because there was a likelihood of some ill-informed opposition.

#### PUBLIC RESPONSE

So we started the work, mentally prepared to encounter a certain measure of opposition. It is, however, a pleasure to record that after the first year, there was remarkably little opposition amongst the parents and often those who 'came to scoff remained to pray'. In many cases, the parents, caught up by the movement, joined their children in the work of school repairs and decorations or of cleaning up the town or the village. The credit for this achievement must go partly to the teachers who went about their work with tact and good sense, disarming opposition, and partly to the spirit of the age which had already worn down the long existing prejudice against manual work. I was told by some people, well acquainted with past conditions in the State, that such an experiment would have created a furore, if not a riot, even a couple of decades ago.

#### HOW WE SET ABOUT THE WORK

As a first step, a conference of educational officials was convened in Jammu where the objects underlying the experiment were discussed and elucidated, and the proposals and suggestions made were thrashed out. It was impressed on all the members present that they should not take up this project mecha-



nically, as if the students and teachers were carrying out some work externally imposed on them by the Department. The ideology of productive work and social service underlying the celebration of the Labour Week and the value of cultivating a sense of kinship with their fellow workers in the field and the farm should be brought home to the students so that they may participate in the experiment with understanding and joy. It was further pointed out that the success of the scheme depended, above all, on a careful planning of the work to be done after a due scrutiny of the means and resources at the disposal of each school. In the case of big schools in particular, where a large number of students had to be kept fruitfully occupied for six or seven days, there were many loopholes for maladjustment and waste of time and effort, and planning was absolutely necessary for success. Moreover, it is a great educative experience in itself to plan out work on a co-operative basis so as to eliminate waste and utilize varied individual talents and capacities for the achievement of a common purpose. After the conference, the following brief circular was issued by the Director of Education to all Inspecting Officers and Headmasters who were responsible for organizing this week in their respective spheres:

'I am writing this to invite your attention to the project of the "Labour Week" which is proposed to be organized in the schools of the Province. I consider the successful organization of this week to be a matter of the greatest significance from the educational point of view and, therefore, request you to give your careful attention to the details of the work which is to be done during this week. If a carefully considered programme is drawn up beforehand and the willing and enthusiastic co-operation of the students is obtained by explaining to them the objectives underlying this work, it will not only have great social and moral value, but it can also be correlated with academic work. So far as its social and moral values are concerned, they lie in the fact that it brings the school into close relationship with the envioning life of the community and gives the school children an opportunity of taking part in constructive work and service, thereby making them—as well as the members of the local community—realize the identity of their interests. Moreover, if students are asked to prepare regular reports of the work done by them and to take pride in the improvement of their school and their village or town, they will acquire a new interest in the success and efficiency of the school and learn to devote themselves more readily to any reading, writing or practical work which may be correlated with this activity.

I shall be glad to receive in due course, reports of the work done under you in this connexion and particularly to find out what the reaction of the parents and other people has been to this experiment.'

#### THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

The Inspectors of Schools convened meetings of Headmasters and inspecting officers under them with the object of discussing matters of detail and the following outline programme was drawn up to guide the teachers all over the province in the work to be attempted during the week:

- (1) White-washing of the classrooms;
- (2) Mud plastering of the school roofs wherever necessary;
- (3) Cleaning and improvement of the school rooms, verandahs, compounds, gardens and play-grounds;
- (4) Repairs to the compound walls or fencing;
- (5) Cleaning up of the furniture in the laboratory, the library and the school rooms, and varnishing it, if funds permit;

- (6) School decoration—preparation of charts and pictures, stencilling of suitable mottoes, etc.;
- (7) Improving the school approaches, e.g. filling up of depressions and removing obstacles;
- (8) Improvement of public roads—filling up of depressions and cess pools, clearing of drains etc., in the school locality;
- (9) Improving the school lawn by turfing.

The Chief Engineer (P.W.D.) kindly agreed to the request that, in the case of all schools for which some annual repair grants were sanctioned—and these were usually very small amounts—the cost of the materials purchased by schools for ordinary repairs, and white-washing, etc., should be met out of these grants. This enabled the schools to carry out their programme without incurring any expenditure out of their limited funds and it was also a source of economy to the Public Works Department. The Education Department also secured the co-operation of Municipality and Town Area authorities and borrowed from their stock such implements and tools as they could supply. In some cases other Departments, e.g. the Medical Department, also co-operated in carrying out a cleanliness campaign in towns and villages. It is a noteworthy feature of the experiment that hardly any additional expenditure was incurred. It is necessary to stress this point because financial reasons are always pleaded as an excuse whenever any such project is proposed for adoption.

When the experiment was first tried, there were many instances in which proper and adequate planning could not be done; it was found particularly difficult to engage simultaneously all the students of the school in systematic work and to supervise it effectively. But, gradually, as more experience was gained it was possible to avoid waste of time and effort. An attempt was made, within the general framework of the instructions issued, to elicit proposals and suggestions from the students themselves as to the kind of work which should be done both in and outside the school. We held that the educative usefulness and success of such an experiment depends primarily on the intelligent and willing co-operation of the students, and that it was the business of teachers to help them to realize that they were participating in a significant and freely chosen activity of great social value.

#### THE ACHIEVEMENTS

From the report received in the very first year, it was found that the following kind of work was done by the students in Primary, Middle and High Schools all over the State:

- (1) Cleaning, white-washing, repairing and decorating the school buildings, furniture, lawns, grounds and surroundings.
- (2) Removing stones, glass, iron nails etc., from the lanes and streets.
- (3) Cleaning up watering places like springs and ponds, and helping to dig wells.
- (4) Constructing bridges over small drains and streams to facilitate communication.
- (5) Filling pits in the streets and lanes, clearing and repairing roads, repairing dangerously slippery hill slopes.
- (6) Organizing bathing centres for slum children and first aid centres for the public.
- (7) Teaching adults to write their names.
- (8) Improving drainage of selected localities and drying marshy land created by open drains.



- (9) Turfing school compounds.
- (10) Propaganda amongst the public regarding the importance of personal cleanliness and social sanitation in order to ward off common diseases; storing of manure pits; learning the use of the modern agricultural methods and implements. This was done through practical demonstrations as well as through organized processions in the course of which teachers and students delivered speeches, sang songs and arranged other programmes.

In order to give a concrete idea of the scope of work accomplished and to show that concerted effort and activity can achieve great results, a few of the projects actually carried out by some of the schools are listed below :

- (1) Putting up a solid stone wall  $150' \times 2\frac{1}{2}' \times 3'$  around the school garden.
- (2) Construction of bridges over 'nullahs' (streams) which had made it difficult for children to attend school.
- (3) Construction of latrines for the school.
- (4) Cleaning up a large plot of land adjacent to the school to make a playing ground and cutting down tall bushes where snakes used to shelter.
- (5) Setting up of centres where babies were given daily baths.
- (6) Planning and construction of model kitchens.
- (7) Construction of a fair-weather, thatched 'reading room'.
- (8) Social service work in the hospitals.
- (9) Constructing a mud wall round a mosque.
- (10) Cleaning of sulphur springs which had been dirty for decades and become a source of disease and infection.
- (11) Construction of a channel to bring water to the school garden.
- (12) Construction of a hut to store sports material with the open trunk of a magnificent *Chinar* tree as its interior.

During this week teachers and students carried on intensive propaganda in favour of better sanitation and Adult Education, carrying placards, holding meetings and singing songs to persuade people to join adult education centres. Camp fires were organized in the evening to provide welcome relaxation to students and afford them opportunities for self-expression in the form of dramas, games, humorous skits and other spontaneous activities. In Srinagar and some other places, students addressed representations to the Municipalities or the Town Area Committees inviting their attention to the insanitary and unhygienic conditions which they had noticed in the course of their cleanliness crusades and requested them to take steps to bring about necessary improvements.

#### THE APPRAISAL

On the whole, from my personal inspection as well as from reports that came to me, I felt convinced that the week's work not only provided a most valuable training for students in social service and co-operative endeavour but also gave them a pleasant and enjoyable time, which is usually not associated with school work in India. They had opportunities of repairing and white-washing their school buildings, improving school room decoration and furniture, planting gardens and lawns and, in some cases, actually constructing small structures. To the growing child and the adolescent, there can be no greater joy than in the thought: '*This is my school because I have made it with the labour of my hands*'. It gives them a new attachment and affection towards the school which is no longer an alien thing but something created by their joint effort. It brings the teachers and their pupils into a new companionship of shared service and enables the former to appreciate individual differences and capa-





Boys dragging a cart-load of stones for a platform.

'Boys are Bees'. They are carrying the washed and painted furniture back into their classrooms.





cities amongst the children. Above all, it brings them both in to close relationship with the local community which sees them labouring for its sake and not infrequently, their surprised scepticism is transformed into spontaneous appreciation and desire for participation. At one place I found boys and local shop-keepers working shoulder to shoulder to clean up not only the roads and bazaars but shops which, in some cases, had not had such cleaning and scrubbing and fastidious care bestowed on them within living memory. If our schools can thus develop in a practical manner the sense of social service and social solidarity between the people and the school children, they will become real centres of education.

At the conclusion of the Labour Week, the following circular was issued by the Director's Office to all teachers and inspecting officers:

'The Labour Week was celebrated in all the State and aided schools throughout the Province of Kashmir from 12 June to 19 June. The object of this new educational experiment was to awaken in all the teachers and students a keen sense of the dignity of labour and to utilize their talents, energy and manpower for the service of the schools and of the local community. I was glad to notice that teachers and students alike responded to the suggestion with spontaneous enthusiasm, and no one—not even the 'highest born'—showed any hesitation or unwillingness in handling the most difficult and unpalatable tasks of manual labour. The public also, as a whole, welcomed the scheme. There were a few critics but most of these were reassured after discussing the matter with teachers and the students. The activities of the Labour Week fell into two categories:

- (a) those relating to the repair, decoration, white-washing and colour washing of the rooms, repair of furniture, improvement of roads and gardens in the schools;
- (b) those which aimed at cleaning up the city or village and rendering other forms of social service. The latter included the cleaning up of specific Mohallas (areas) assigned to each school, improving of bathing ghats and drainage of streets, helping the people in cleaning up their own compounds and houses, laying out small vegetable or flower gardens, writing suitable mottoes on the walls, visiting hospitals etc.

The above list does not exhaust the various activities carried out. Some schools showed considerable ingenuity and resourcefulness in building walls and latrines, constructing store rooms and reclaiming flooded plots of land.

I trust that, in years to come, the scope of Labour Week activities will be further extended and, profiting by our experience of this year, we shall organize it still more effectively and make the public realize that the schools are prepared and willing to play their part in the improvement of civic life. Whenever and wherever there is a difficult job of work to be done which is likely to be of help to people generally, our students will take it up in a spirit of service and adventure, happy in the belief that by undertaking to do it they are educating themselves truly through socially useful productive labour. To the people of the State I should like to convey the assurance that the Department will make this Week a regular feature of its annual activities, and will endeavour to educate the growing generation to appreciate the ideals of social service and the dignity of labour so that they may develop into self-respecting, resourceful, co-operative and broad-minded citizens.

In reviewing the Labour Week, as a whole, there are a few points which I would request all teachers and inspecting officers to bear in mind in order to derive the maximum educational, social and moral value from this project.

Firstly, the work requires careful planning and organization beforehand not by the teachers only but by the teachers and students in collaboration.



This is necessary for two reasons. It provides extremely useful training for the students in carrying out co-operative projects intelligently and adjusting existing resources to purposeful objectives. It obviates the risk of waste of effort and slackness on the part of some students, which is almost certain to occur if careful forethought has not been given to this matter.

Secondly, every year the underlying objectives of this work should be reimpessed on the students and their reactions to it carefully watched. They should not feel that they are merely carrying out a routine activity, but that they are placing their talents and capacities at the service of their school and community, and that life can have no higher aim and no better fulfilment than that of service.

Thirdly, an attempt should be made in future to connect up those activities more closely with the ordinary academic work of the school. There are many ways of doing so—asking groups of boys to prepare reports of the work done by them; using some of the experience gained as composition themes in class; calculations of cost of repairs; preparing short reports of 'Social Surveys' carried out in the town or village. Composition work, in particular, done against such a background acquires a vividness and spontaneity not usually associated with writing exercises in schools.

Fourthly, the quality of the manual work and repairs, etc., done by the students should gradually improve and they should begin to realize that anything that is worth doing at all is worth doing well and that, like Carlyle's carpenter, with every stroke of the spade or the hammer, one could either break or strengthen the Ten Commandments. If it is necessary to secure, for this purpose, the service of some mason or carpenter or painter as an adviser, there should be no hesitation in doing so.

In the end, it only remains for me to express my appreciation and gratitude once again to all the students and teachers and inspecting officers who responded magnificently to this call of service and, without any special funds or training, carried it out with success. Who knows but that this small and modest beginning might become the nucleus of a State-wide movement for introducing some form of compulsory social service for all classes of people, particularly the school and college students, whose manpower may be utilized for a period of six months to one year for grappling with the numerous problems of illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, disease, lack of sanitation and social intolerance which disfigure our national life? This has been done and is being done in other countries and there is no reason why our country should lag behind. If conscription is permissible for purposes of war, why should it be ruled out of court for purposes of peaceful social service and reconstruction.'

This was the review that I wrote after the first year's experience. The work continued during the next five years with increasing success and stability, and I have no hesitation in saying that it did contribute something to vitalizing school education and gave the school children of all classes and creeds the sense of belonging to a community. Sometimes in moments of pardonable optimism, I have the feeling that perhaps the training and impress received by these youngsters in the early forties may have had something to do with the fine example of communal peace and co-operation which the youth of Kashmir put up in the late forties.

# THE FREDERIC SENAT ARTISAN SECTION IN BIZERTA

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN TUNISIA

by GEORGES GASTON

THE head of the Bizerta boys' high school in 1930 was a man of action who combined wide experience of Tunisia with a strong imagination and devotion to his work. An advocate of new teaching methods, he succeeded in winning the support of the Director of Public Instruction; and it is in Frederic Senat's reports to the Director that we can re-trace his ideas.

He wrote: 'We should not be hampered by a pedagogical idealism which is impracticable; rather let us start with reality and move towards the ideal.' His school was born not of an abstract conception but of observation of Tunisian social and economic conditions, of the demands imposed by this environment.

Senat decided the main need to be a labour force, 'modern, abundant, disciplined'. No skilled labour existed. There were not enough schools to create it. At the time the efforts of the Protectorate were directed chiefly towards reviving traditional skills. Senat did not deny the value of native arts and crafts, but he felt them limited both economically and politically. 'The Tunisians,' he said, 'should not be confined in the traditional craft patterns, more picturesque than productive.' The economic progress of Tunisia depended on 'a large labour force skilled in elementary modern techniques'.

How then to train these workers? Senat was aware of the strides made by technical education in France and abroad through both State and private enterprise. Only this type of education, he knew, could 'shape and direct the Tunisian child, giving him the general and the technical knowledge that becomes increasingly useful in industries of increasing complexity'.

Yet how could Tunisia be expected to provide the finances for setting up such engineering trade schools and technical colleges—whose equipment was dearer than that of high schools or universities? Senat noted of Tunisia, 'The money problem comes first. Even in good years Tunisia is a poor land—a square mile produces little—a human unit produces little—revenue is small and unstable. Yet the need is correspondingly greater, since to catch up with modern nations we have to accomplish in a few generations what they, with larger resources, have taken centuries to do. We must therefore train many workers at little cost, instead of just a few expensively. This is the only way to increase the productivity of the country, to increase revenue and thereby speed up progress.'

Since it was impossible to set up engineering colleges, a new formula had to be found. 'Normally,' wrote Senat, 'one settles on the educational coat and then selects pupils who can wear it. We must perforce change the process: take what we find and dress each one according to his size—dress as many people as well as may be.'

So that the new school might cost little and 'train many workers for the least outlay' only useful work would be undertaken; pupils would be placed in the realistic conditions of a workshop for training as masons, carpenters, joiners, blacksmiths. And the pupils were to build their schools themselves.

In order to enrol the largest number of pupils, no entrance qualifications



would be demanded. Any other course would neglect those sections of the population who needed most urgently to learn a trade and earn a living.

The plan slowly took shape. The new school was to be joined to the Boys' High School under the name 'Artisan Section'. This link gave the new Section a certain amount of prestige and also permitted an economical sharing of staff. The entrance age was fixed at 13 years, thus allaying the fears of some teachers who saw the Section as a rival of the primary school. Senat wrote: 'Thirteen years is almost the school-leaving age. Pupils working for the Primary School Certificate will not abandon this for some other course. I remove children from the street, from vagrancy, and not from the primary school. Far from depriving children of general education, I intend to lead to such education those who would normally not have thought of it.' Senat thus aimed at giving both technical training and liberal education, and pupils at the Section would be enabled to take the P.S.C. while learning their crafts.

Early in 1930 Director-General Gau gave Frederic Senat a grant of 150,000 francs and authorized him to set up the Artisan Section. Yet premises and staff were still lacking. The experiment could only start in May. There were thirty students; with three exceptions they were Tunisian Moslem boys, illiterate and knowing no French. Only four fell away—one returned to the streets, a second said he had mistaken the Section for an engineering college, and two others were attracted by offers of employment.

For the first term Senat was the small band's only instructor. They reacted with some hostility to their working conditions—a bare piece of ground with a 'For sale' board still up, two secondhand benches, a few trees for shelter—in fact, the conditions they would face if they had to build a farmhouse in an open field. Within six weeks the students made their equipment—ladders, trestles and benches, frames for scaffolding, masonry troughs—and then Senat taught them to build a wall. At last a small lean-to appeared.

Senat had to contend with laziness, awkwardness, pilfering; but he soon noted that his students improved in morale and in skill. By the end of the year they left on vacation well satisfied, conquered, no doubt, by the enthusiasm of their teacher.

There was a rush for the opening in October 1931, and the enrolment had to be limited to seventy-five. As before, the large majority were Tunisians and had little or no previous schooling. Attendance remained full; for the few who left were quickly replaced by new recruits.

Material conditions had not improved. The Section had only a field—liable to flooding—the tools and equipment made the previous year, a small lean-to, a make-shift and inadequate staff. Senat used the State grant to buy the land and such raw materials as would be needed for future constructions, and to pay the staff.

Despite a severe winter he persisted in his plan of 'having the school built by the students'. The students first terraced the land, then dug foundations. Poorly clad in the bitter cold, the teams floundered through mud; but in time they erected a long shed and a workshop which they fitted up and furnished. By the end of the school year some 400 square metres had been roofed. A cyclone hit Bizerta about this time, causing great damage especially at the High School—but not a single tile of the Section's building was blown down.

During this school year Senat listed as follows the guiding principles of his work:

1. Manual work in all its forms—from terracing land to plastering a finished building, from using a broom to a sculptor's chisel;
2. Machines of the kind used by small artisans (and then only of secondary importance);

3. No rigid specialization; wood-workers who begin with simple joints should also be capable of building a wall; masons should know how to make wooden frames; we are training workers for our towns and farms, not factory hands;
4. No sampling; by this I mean the few pupils attracted by little-known crafts, grouped about mysterious experts. We need large teams. If a workman at 50 francs a day teaches 5 students, the costs for each student is 10 francs; if he teaches 25, the cost falls to 2 francs;
5. Recover from useful or usable products the cost of each student—not so as to spend less money, but in order to train more students for the same outlay;
6. Build up programmes of general education according to the needs and abilities of the students. Get the children to do as much as they can, but do not try to go further.

By the end of this school year the students were divided up for general education as follows: division A, those preparing for the Primary School Certificate; B, those with a little French, reading and writing but no arithmetic; C (in two classes), those who were quite illiterate and without French. In the timetable, divisions A and B devoted 3 hours a day to general subjects, and C, 4 hours. For technical work students were divided into two large sections—woodwork and masonry. Finally, a preparatory course was organized for students too young or too weak to undertake hard work—with 6 hours of class and 1 of workshop daily.

When the vacation started on 1 July 1932 (and incidentally, voluntary work continued at the Section throughout the summer holidays) the labour of Frederic Senat was visibly bearing fruit. Despite hard conditions, the

Vocational Training Centre of  
Gammarth: a workshop.





students had not deserted. By now they were proud of the results, of the buildings they had put up on land they had known bare. Most had come to the Section illiterate; they could now read and write, and spoke some French. These remarkable results silenced the critics (who had been numerous) and ensured the future of the Section.

Frederic Senat watched over the Section for five years more. When he retired, the principles he had evolved were respected by his successors.

Ten years later, on the eve of the liberation of Tunisia, in 1942, the Artisan Section of the Boys' High School of Bizerta had 250 students. It continued to accept all applicants over 13 years of age, coming generally from the poorer classes. Every year a number of students passed the PSC examination—sufficient proof that the reduced formal schooling still gave bright and keen students the benefit of elementary education.

Manual work remained the basis of apprenticeship. However, the Section had acquired a number of machines similar to those found in workshops in the countryside, and students were trained to use them.

The Section comprised 8 homogeneous classes. Law and order reigned; thefts were rare, and if a dishonest boy arrived in the Section the orderliness and industry about him soon led to his reform.

Performance certificates given to students on leaving the Section helped them to find employment. Unfortunately a number left before completing their apprenticeship, impelled by a wish to contribute to the upkeep of their families; the Section did not pay its students.

The Section remained a large workshop. New buildings were added—including a large store and a hall—and all the fittings and furnishings were made by the students. In addition, the Section assisted in the upkeep of the High School and had made, for the High School and the Department of Education, several hundred desks, tables, chairs and blackboards.

At that time the Section cost the State 350,000 francs a year for staff salaries and equipment, or about 1,400 francs per student—a modest outlay for the benefits derived from the Section: economies in the upkeep and furnishing of other schools, the placing each year on the labour market of some sixty youths, socially useful, who had previously been ignorant and unwanted.

After the liberation of Tunisia we decided to profit from this experiment. The ravages of war had increased still further the need for trained modern technicians, as well as the number of abandoned children. We therefore tried to create a number of schools of the Frederic Senat type. But we soon found that the Artisan Section was not easily imitated; it was the work of a single man, it had a short but strong tradition, and to serve the purposes of 'mass production' we had to make some changes in the plan.

I cannot give here all details of this evolution from the prototype school. Over a number of years new experiments were started in various places with differing conditions; similar schools for girls were set up; and we encouraged the ordinary primary schools to follow Senat's example in their manual training classes. By degrees both the plans and the necessary regulations were worked out, and in October 1948 Tunisia possessed over 40 centres for technical training with an enrolment of 5,348 boys and girls. My concern here is to outline the type of institution we eventually arrived at—and to give reasons for our departures from the model we were imitating.

Although we first used the name 'Frederic Senat Schools', we were obliged to change it because it did not give our students a clear enough idea of the studies they were to follow. The term 'Vocational Training Centres' (*Centres*



Vocational Training Centre of  
Gammarth: Esparto-grass Factory.

*de formation professionnelle*) was chosen, and we even required that the trades taught should be indicated over the school's gateway and on its letter paper. It was most important to avoid all misunderstandings, and to let parents know that children sent to a given Centre were being trained for a given trade.

Here we departed somewhat from Senat's doctrine. His school produced multiple-purpose workers, and gave a broad rather than a deep training. We led our students to greater specialization, perhaps as a result of the economic development of Tunisia between 1920 and 1943; for it is easier today to place a specialized worker than a jack-of-all-trades. This has also enabled us to fit out each Centre with more suitable and modern equipment. We have, however, avoided over-specialization—for example by increasing the 'Centres for rural artisans' which give a broad training in the use and upkeep of farm implements—from the plough to the tractor—as well as in the basic skills of carpentry, masonry and the smithy.

The age of entry to the vocational training Centres has been raised to 14 years, the average age for completing the primary course, thus removing competition between these two types of school. But we have resolutely maintained Senat's principle: the vocational Centre is not designed for primary-school leavers, but for those who have never been to school or who have completed at most the first grades.

The vocational Centres are thus designed for children of the humblest classes; unable to obtain an elementary education, they arrive at adolescence with no prospects except some wretched trade which does not demand an apprenticeship. These young boys and girls are just as intelligent as their more fortunate companions who enjoy a good education—simple tests are enough to show the similarity of the two groups. They have, too, a great fund of goodwill.



For them the opportunity of learning a craft is unexpected; when they find true educators at the Centre, able to bring out the nobility of manual work beside its hardships, when they acquire a general education which enables them to rise within the craft, they become extremely attached to the Centre and to the trade they learn there.

In this way we have avoided one of the main hazards of vocational training in an economically under-developed country. How many trade schools recruit their students from primary-school leavers, only to see three-quarters or all of them later graduate to junior administrative jobs.

Following Frederic Senat, we have devoted much attention to general education—aiming ‘to raise as high as possible the students’ cultural level, however low it may be’. But this ‘general education’, comprising moral, theoretical and physical training, is essentially practical. The craft that the student is learning forms a centre of interest around which other subjects are grouped. Our objectives are to lead the apprentice as quickly as may be to the practice of his craft and to give him the general education he needs to grasp his place in the working world and to rise within his trade. This programme led us to give up preparing our students for the P.S.C. despite the example of the Bizerta Section. Instead, we set up ‘Certificates on completion of apprenticeship’, one for each of the crafts taught in the Centres, with tests in general subjects which corresponded to the average level of attainment. Weaker students could take a ‘Certificate of manual skill’ in the practical subjects alone.

In order to associate employers’ and workers’ unions with our Centres, we have given them strong representation on Patronage Committees and examination juries. Employers interested in hiring apprentices form the

Building operations and training at  
Gammarth.



majority of the juries, and we have been glad to see them accept this duty and carry it out with careful efficiency.

Wherever possible, the Centres are given a large measure of administrative autonomy. They are not linked to a College, as the Bizerta Section was, or to a primary school. Each Centre commands certain resources—its own premises and the state grant of funds and staff—and with these it is free to seek its own way, striving to adapt itself closely to the economic needs of the region and to the needs of its students. A similar freedom exists in financial matters. Each Centre is allowed to develop a clientele of its own, to maintain a budget and to use the proceeds from sales for the purchase of raw materials, or for the care of its students. Partly as a measure of economy and partly to treat the students in the same way as those in other schools, we have always refused to pay the students for their work; however, each one has a savings bank book and a part of the income from sales is credited to the apprentice. The savings help to set him up in a job when he leaves the Centre.

Some of the Centres for building trades and rural artisans were started on bare fields, and the students themselves erected workshops and classrooms. Such activities made excessive demands on the staff, to the point of obstructing educational work. It seems preferable to grant the Centres some modest premises from the start, which they can change or add to in the course of time.

Boarding establishments have been set up in all Centres with large enough premises, so that they might take country as well as town students; and large funds are allotted to these Centres for bursary purposes.



Gammarth: a group of boys and an instructor.



The staff are selected from practising teachers and master artisans. The former bring teaching skill and experience and a great enthusiasm for their new task; we expect them to revise their methods and develop fresh ones suited to the purposes of the Centre. The master-artisans bring us technical skill. Linked closely to the teachers from the very foundation of the Centre, they quickly realize the importance of their own rôle in a craft-centred school, and become excellent educators.

The Centres have been visibly successful: a steady demand for enrolment, employment in good conditions for students when they leave, widespread public interest—such are the signs. In particular, one Centre has given me satisfaction, that at Gammarth on the outskirts of Tunis, set up in an old ruined Arab palace which had served as an internment camp. Although this Centre was designed for young delinquents and drew its recruits from prisons and beggars' dens, the Administration applied the same principles and methods as in the other vocational centres. After many vicissitudes—due rather to the staff than to the boys—the Centre prospered and took its place beside the others. The illustrations for this article give some idea of the present scope of the work at Gammarth.

Obviously these Centres do not by themselves solve the vast problem of vocational education for an under-developed country. They are only one element in a broadly-conceived policy which demands a great deal of capital and of perseverance. The other elements in this policy appear to me to be:

- to develop practical teaching in the primary school which, though in no sense 'vocational', will educate the child's hands as well as his mind;

- to set up technical and vocational schools for training the middle ranks of industry;

- to create technical training centres with accelerated courses for adults;

- to set up guidance centres for young people and adults;

- to extend apprenticeship in public and private enterprises; and particularly to have large enterprises set up centres of their own with State aid and guidance;

- to aid the immigration of highly skilled workers;

- to develop a wage policy favouring the skilled worker in relation to the junior clerical worker from the elementary school.

The only conclusion we can draw from the Tunisian experiment is this: in countries with many unschooled and unemployed adolescents, and with a lack of trained workers, there is room for an establishment between the primary school and the technical college of Western type; and this new type of school cannot be imported ready-made from abroad, it must be thought out and constructed on the spot, with constant attention to the economic and social conditions it is designed to improve.

# THE EDUCATIONAL CENTRES FOR NORTH AFRICAN WORKERS IN FRANCE

by RENÉ OCHS

## THE PROBLEM

THE presence of illiterate North Africans in metropolitan France gives rise to an unusual and novel educational problem. At first sight it would seem like a simple repetition of the problem found in Algeria—but the circumstances are radically different. The working and living conditions of the migrant North Africans reveal the disadvantages at which their lack of French and of the most elementary education place them in making adjustments to a new society. Finally—and this is perhaps the root of the problem—this underprivileged minority has full French citizenship, lives and works under the same statutory regulation as all other Frenchmen.

In fact the law of 20 September 1947, providing full citizenship for Algerians, brought the question to the fore: was it acceptable to have, in the midst of the French community, a fairly large minority which remained illiterate? Evidently not. In Algeria itself some earlier efforts had been undertaken: a 20-year educational plan for children was begun in 1945, the Académie d'Alger prepared courses for adults and re-organized these into a mass campaign in October 1947. But in France the problem remained in all its complexity. A higher standard of living and deceptive hopes continued to draw a steady stream of migrants, many of whom came from the poorest mountain regions in Central Algeria where some communities are still totally illiterate. The human and technical difficulties arising from this state of affairs are quite obvious. In an effort to reduce them, adult courses for North Africans have been organized in France.

## START AND GROWTH

The first 'Educational Centres for North African workers in metropolitan France' were set up by the Ministry of Education in October 1945. They increased rapidly, as the figures show:

October 1945	7
Year 1945-46	12
Year 1946-47	25
Year 1947-48	32
Year 1948-49	50

By the end of March 1950 they totalled 58, of which 33 for Paris and the Seine—the original centre of the experiment—and 25 for the other Departments. At present the courses comprise 109 classes, accounting for 472 lesson-hours per week. Some 4,100 pupils are enrolled, with a staff of 152 teachers. The Ministry of Education bears the cost of teachers' salaries and equipment.

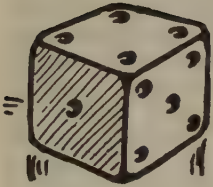
*Opposite:* A specimen page from the special primer.



lapoule. lapipe. la pouliè. la mine. le matelas. *aiééou*



Madani et Mouloud dînent.



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da dé dè dê di de dou  
*da dè dê dē di de dou*

le dé Madame Madani et Mouloud dînent  
la pédale Madani Le malade n'a pas dîné  
le malade Mouloud Le malade n'a pas d'appétit  
une datte Médéa M. Ould Ali à Médéa

*Le malade a-t-il dîné? il n'a pas dîné  
Madani a appelé Mouloud à midi et demi*

*d d d da da da  
le dé le dé le dé le dé le dé  
Madani et Mouloud. Madani et Mouloud.*

Each Centre offers preparatory and elementary courses, and some have a middle course for the more advanced.

#### DIFFICULTIES

The difficulties met with have been numerous and varied. The initial one of recruitment was met by systematic propaganda: in all the places where the North Africans gathered—factories, cafés, hotels, hostels—posters were put up and teachers came to canvass their first pupils. Soon those attending courses were the best propagandists; unions and factory management also gave their support. Although the majority of the present courses were started at the request of the workers themselves or the labour inspectors responsible for North Africans, the problem of attendance remained a difficult one; the people to be catered for were essentially manual workers who were tired out by a long day's work before the class began (7 to 9 or 8 to 10 at night). Only a select few could make the extra effort needed, and still fewer attended regularly after enrolment. The new pupil is sometimes discouraged at not knowing how to read and write after a few sessions—or, on the contrary, says that he is satisfied enough with the most rudimentary skills. The group of 'irregulars' represent another kind of wastage. In the first years after the Liberation electricity cuts led to a rhythm of alternate day- and night-shifts in the factories. Even with the co-operation of firms which regulated the timetables as best they could, this was a serious obstacle for workers attending classes. Although conditions have steadily improved, the seasonal phenomena of change of job and change of home continue, and each summer and winter there is a loss of membership. Such difficulties are inevitable; yet the broad mass of pupils show much goodwill and perseverance. It is estimated that 50% of those enrolled attend with great regularity; 10% attend intermittently; and the rest, unsatisfactorily. Considering the voluntary nature of this teaching, the problem of attendance seems fairly well solved.

Varying attendance naturally raises problems of method: fluctuations are such that the teacher cannot obtain consistent classes with properly graded pupils. Ages vary considerably—from 17 to 55 years—and so do the initial levels of the pupils: some are completely illiterate, some can read and write Arabic but not French, and others have a forgotten background of schooling in French. Quite often the pupil who has haphazardly picked up incorrect French is a more difficult problem than the other with no French at all. Under these circumstances normal teaching by classes becomes impossible, and the teacher has to organize work parties of varying size or to adopt almost individual methods.

In the beginning there was a great dearth of teaching material and the standard textbooks for French elementary schools were used. But as the adult education service of the Académie d'Alger gained experience in its courses it began in 1947 to publish a *Bulletin de liaison* for teachers of adults in Algeria and then brought out a special primer (*Méthode de lecture à l'usage des cours d'adultes*). Both were made available to the Centres in France and helped considerably in the development of teaching methods.

#### CURRICULUM AND METHOD

The main subjects taught are reading, writing and arithmetic, and such ancillaries as history, geography and science are not treated separately but taken incidentally in the reading course. The learning of arithmetic (to which North Africans take readily) is based on problems of a practical nature—



prices, wages, social insurance—such as will arouse the pupils' interest. On balance, it is the teaching of reading and writing in French which makes the greatest demands on the teachers.

The reading method, especially, represents an effort to solve the problem along psychological lines: first, it is designed to give quick results, so that the pupil may be encouraged by noting his regular progress. Next, while phonetic principles are used for writing and for teaching correct pronunciation, words are always associated directly with objects or ideas by means of illustrations; instruction is based, in fact, on the direct method. Finally, the vocabulary and subject-matter are selected with a mind to the twofold interests of the adult pupils—transplanted as they are to an urban and a labour milieu. The teaching thus has a functional quality: while bridging the gap of primary schooling it is designed to direct the pupils towards adaptation to their work and their surroundings. This is how the teachers themselves view their task. Instead of closing up shop at the end of a lesson, they try to give guidance to their pupils in problems of everyday living—small practical questions (such as sending postal orders, writing letters, filling out forms), advice on health and behaviour matters, and so on—and build up relations of mutual trust and goodwill. In this way the double obstacle of illiteracy and migration is gradually removed.

As the pupils improve their education they naturally look for an improvement in their status, and the programme has to take this into account. With increased demands for skilled workers caused by the development of the Monnet Plan, and an already excessive supply of unskilled workers, the Ministry of Labour has set up centres for accelerated technical training, open to all French workmen. The keener North African pupils may aim at places in these training centres and so derive practical benefit from their earlier studies. For this purpose preparatory courses are organized for them in the North African hostels or on the premises where they work. The standard of the entrance exam to the technical training centres is fairly high; and the aptitude tests for manual dexterity place the Algerian candidates at a disadvantage, since they usually come from rural or mountain communities. In this latter regard, the Ministry is considering the development of a specially adapted battery of tests. But in spite of these obstacles a certain number of Algerians have won through: in 1949, 300 of them were attending accelerated courses.

Detailed study of the training courses would lead us too far from the immediate question of fundamental education. A mention is necessary, however, because they represent the last part of a continuous programme; the earlier part alone would not suffice to adapt illiterate rural people to an urban industrial culture.

There can be no complete and final solution in France to North African illiteracy, since the workers are here only temporarily. The purpose is to give them, during their short stay, opportunities for education similar to those developing in Algeria, with the local modifications outlined above. And this objective the Educational Centres do seem to achieve.

# A STUDY ON FUNCTIONAL LITERACY FOR CITIZENSHIP IN THE PHILIPPINES

by GERARDO FLORES

*This report summarizes a lengthy piece of research carried out under Government auspices. In due course it is hoped that the full document will be made available.*

THAT effective citizenship depends much upon literacy is a basic assumption, particularly in a democratic country like the Philippines, where the political power and responsibility ultimately reside in the people. Intelligent exercise of such power and responsibility is assured only when those who assume the duties and wield the prerogatives of sovereignty are at least functionally literate, nay enlightened.

Fundamental education the world over cannot ignore the problem of illiteracy. While it is possible for an illiterate person to acquire good character, it is found that criminality, low economic productivity and other forms of social and economic backwardness are often associated with illiteracy. Ignorance also provides a fertile ground for unrest in peasant and industrial areas, which leads to loss of production and sometimes destruction of human life and property. The adults who make the vital decisions of the present must become at least literate to ensure good citizenship.

How literate must a person be to be able to discharge efficiently his obligations and exercise wisely his rights as a good citizen? More specifically this question may be stated thus:

Is the four-year compulsory and free primary education in the Philippines as provided by law enough? It is generally accepted that the primary educational concern of the State is to make its citizens *functionally literate for useful citizenship*. In brief, the target for compulsory education must be functional literacy. It is the irreducible minimum standard below which no civilized country can descend without committing cultural suicide.

If four years of free and compulsory primary education are not enough, how much common and basic education should be required?

## PROCEDURE AND MATERIALS

A comparative study of the free and compulsory education standards of the the world would doubtless yield data helpful in arriving at a solution of the problem. Yet only objective data obtained from a valid and reliable evaluation can give a satisfactory answer.

It was for this reason that in December, 1948, this study was conducted. For the purpose of the study, functional literacy consists of: first, ability to read and interpret satisfactorily reading matter such as ordinary letters, newspapers, notices and signs, advertisements, and tax receipts; second, ability to write an ordinary letter; and third, ability to make computations involving the four fundamental operations and solve problems of day-to-day living. This concept of literacy considers literacy in relation to its use in making the person useful as a citizen. Literacy *per se* is not a desirable thing until it is put to work by the individual in making himself socially efficient.

Test materials to gauge the abilities mentioned above were originally prepared in English. The equivalents in the first five major Philippine lan-



guages were subsequently made and used in the appropriate regions in the country. In the reading test, six representative reading abilities were included, namely: understanding a news item, reading a letter, interpreting signs and notices, getting specific information from an advertisement, checking a tax receipt, and reading a commercial label. Ten simple common arithmetic problems which the ordinary citizen is expected to be able to solve made up the arithmetic test. For writing and language the test consisted of writing a simple letter inviting a friend to a party.

Before the tests were used in the nation-wide survey, they were first refined on the basis of observations gathered in two trial testings.

An accounting of the cases scattered in 31 out of 50 school divisions of the Philippines showed that 6,974 pupils in Grades III, IV, V, VI, and the First Year of the high school and 6,052 adults who had completed Grades II, III, IV, V, VI and VII were included in the survey. Approximately one-half of each group, according to grade, took the English version of the tests while the other half used the vernacular version. A sampling procedure which eliminated extreme cases ensured that the groups in each grade were equated. Only adults and pupils of average ability were included. On the average the adults had left school from fifteen to seventeen years previous to the testing.

## RESULTS

What results were obtained from the survey? Indicated below are simplified tabulations taken from a detailed report of the survey which discussed the means used to ensure that the tests used were valid and reliable enough for the purpose.

Table I. Results of the Functional Literacy Tests given to adults of average ability, 25 to 35 years of age, who had left school on or before June 1938

	Highest Grade completed before leaving school	Reading		Arithmetic		Writing	Language
		% of cases scoring 73 or higher on the test	% of cases scoring 83% or higher on the test	% of cases scoring 70% or higher on the test	% of cases scoring 80% or higher on the test	% rated Good or Fair	% rated Good or Fair
English Version	II	12.8	6.7	13.5	5.6	39.6	20.9
	III	33.1	18.9	23.4	15.0	59.7	35.0
	IV	46.1	31.2	36.3	24.7	71.7	52.0
	V	62.1	42.4	47.4	33.9	76.8	64.2
	VI	78.0	62.2	67.2	51.0	89.0	80.6
	VII	87.1	70.2	75.5	63.9	89.8	85.7
Vernacular Version	II	27.5	21.6	17.7	12.9	47.0	34.8
	III	39.9	24.5	33.7	22.0	61.0	47.8
	IV	57.3	38.1	38.2	20.9	72.6	65.8
	V	63.3	40.4	50.1	33.3	80.5	74.9
	VI	74.8	56.0	65.5	45.3	85.6	80.6
	VII	89.6	74.6	77.8	62.2	91.2	89.3

Table I reads as follows: 12.8% of the adults who finished Grade II and left school more than fifteen years on the average were able to answer correctly at least 73% of the questions in the reading test. The other entries of the table may be read similarly.

Table II. Results of the Functional Literacy Tests given to school pupils of average ability whose previous year's general average ranged from 77% to 82% and who are of normal age or not more than two years over age

Highest Grade completed before leaving school	Reading		Arithmetic		Writing	Language
	% of cases scoring 73% or higher on the test	% of cases scoring 83% or higher on the test	% of cases scoring 70% or higher on the test	% of cases scoring 80% or higher on the test	% rated Good or Fair	% rated Good or Fair
<i>English Version</i>	2.6	0.1	1.9	0.9	50.0	16.6
	3.6	8.9	8.7	4.6	69.2	37.4
	4.6	34.0	30.2	17.1	83.5	64.2
	5.6	56.2	59.0	39.8	87.2	76.4
	6.6	76.0	68.9	51.4	88.0	83.4
<i>Vernacular Version</i>	2.6	6.5	3.4	2.3	39.4	18.5
	3.6	21.4	10.0	4.2	62.3	44.9
	4.6	39.2	25.5	13.0	75.0	65.3
	5.6	61.2	51.9	31.1	85.0	83.5
	6.6	69.7	61.7	44.6	89.7	87.0

At the time of the test the pupils were completing the sixth month of the 10-month school year. Table II therefore is to be read as follows: Only 2.4% of the pupils who completed Grade II and six months were able to answer at least 73% of the questions in the reading test. The other entries of the table may be read similarly.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Before the conclusions derived from the study are given, it is necessary to make a summarized statement on the limitations of the survey. No previously developed norms could be used as a basis of comparison. Only a written language test could be used. In evaluating the performance of the pupils one should consider the fact that they have been schooled under the two single session plan in the primary grades which provides a shorter time than the primary programme attended by the adults in 1936 and years back. A possible factor that may offset this disadvantage of the pupils is that their teachers today have higher qualifications than the teachers of the adults who left school some fifteen years ago. Bearing in mind the limitations one may make the following conclusions:

1. Functional literacy being a complex ability is not obtained at any one grade level. In written English about three-fourths of the pupils reach a fairly satisfactory standard after finishing the fourth grade. Adults out of school for about sixteen years would retain the same writing skill in more than seven cases out of ten, if they previously completed at least the fourth grade. If they stayed one-half year longer the proportion would more likely be eight out of ten.

For more than three-fourths (76.4%) of the pupils, functional literacy in the English language skills involved in letter writing may be attained at the middle of the sixth grade. However, to make the letter writing ability permanent for adults an additional over-learning period of about half a year



would perhaps be necessary. Mastery of letter writing in the vernacular would most likely require less time. The actual time needed may be determined by the experiment in the use of the vernacular now going on in Iloilo. Considering that there are language skills, written and oral, that are more difficult than those involved in writing a simple letter of invitation it is obvious that language training up to the end of the sixth grade would still be inadequate to ensure functional literacy.

In reading, 73% efficiency is reached by about four-fifths of the pupils halfway through Grade VI, where the language of instruction is English. Permanent retention of the same ability among adults, who have been out of school for about fifteen years, would require extension of the training to the end of the sixth grade for a little less than four-fifths of them. For three-fourths of the pupils to attain at least 83% efficiency they should be in school until about the middle of the seventh grade. Expected loss due to leaving school would require, perhaps, an over-learning period of half a school year so that at least seven out of every ten leaving school would achieve the 83% standard.

Completion of the seventh grade for about three out of every four pupils would be needed to enable a learner to attain functional literacy in solving arithmetical problems and retain it even after the lapse of fifteen years. This would be so if 70% efficiency is accepted as satisfactory. When this standard is raised to 80% efficiency only a little more than six out of every eleven Grade VII graduates would qualify.

On the basis of the above observations it may be concluded that, with the present system of elementary education, about seven years are necessary to make a learner functionally literate for useful citizenship. This is longer than is considered necessary in the United States. The American standard is completion of Grade V. If the quality of instruction is improved by the employment of more capable and better trained teachers who would teach the pupils under a longer daily schedule, it might be possible to shorten the period needed by the learner to attain functional literacy.

2. It is evident that the present Constitutional guarantee of free public primary education of the Philippines does not provide sufficient basic education for functional literacy, much less for effective citizenship. Furthermore, functional literacy, even of the most efficient kind, must not be made the goal of basic education. It should be a means towards achieving good citizenship. The content of such literacy instruction is of supreme importance. Does it promote the kind of character needed by free men in a democracy? Does it develop good health? Does it contribute to the observance of human relationships so sorely needed today to maintain peace not only on a family, neighbourhood, and regional basis but also on a national and world basis? Let it not be forgotten that mere literacy has in the past been no guarantee against warmindedness.

3. Facts gathered in this study do not confirm entirely the conclusion of the Monroe Survey Commission that for 'those who had but three years of schooling, command of English has practically faded out'. The evidence tends to show that the pupils do not in fact learn enough during the first three years to make them functionally literate, hence there is not much of real value to be lost through forgetting. As a matter of fact the adults in the lower-grade levels would excel the pupils of equivalent grades. This can easily be proved if the progress of the two groups is graphically presented. Maturation and richer experience are significant enough to reinforce what little scholastic gains have been made and tip the balance in favour of adult performance.

The above-mentioned finding emphasizes the need of expanding the scope of work of the curriculum and evaluation experts. There is a need for creative

leadership in planning, executing, and evaluating worthwhile curriculum projects in various types of communities, such as farming, fishing, industrial, urban, semi-urban, and other types. In this work the curriculum and evaluation workers can be of incalculable assistance to teachers, principals, and supervisors. Teachers should be encouraged to develop teaching materials needed by and suited to the homes and communities that they serve. The basic subject-matter needed for citizenship in the Republic and for developing a strong sentiment for world peace should of course be taken care of. The course of study developed in a central office would need to be enriched by field workers sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the communities where they teach.

4. Learning in school to read, write and figure in English, a foreign language, assists the learner in acquiring the ability to do the same thing in the native language, even if no formal teaching in the language is undertaken. A large amount of transfer from English to the vernacular can be claimed in the abilities needed in reading, problem solving, and letter writing. By learning English a child in Philippine schools gets the added benefit of being able to translate into the vernacular the English abilities gained in reading, writing and arithmetic.

Nevertheless, objective data obtained by the survey tend to show that functional literacy in the local language could perhaps be more easily attained than in English. The performance of the adults in the lower-grade groups is better in vernacular reading than in English reading, even if they had no previous school training in the use of the vernacular. In the case of the pupils who are taught with the vernacular as an auxiliary medium of instruction, their performance in vernacular reading is consistently higher except in the group of Grade VI graduates. In letter writing the pupils' achievement in the vernacular is superior to that in English in all grade groups. Vernacular writing starts with a handicap in the primary grades where it is rarely taught, if taught at all, but it catches up with English writing in the seventh year. The pupils' record in arithmetic in the upper grade groups differs from the results in the other subjects. This may be due to the fact that most of the arithmetic experiences of the child are found in school and are performed in English.

From the standpoint of method the use of the vernacular in the initial stages of school life would be advantageous, but the language problem of the Philippines should not be over-simplified as merely a pedagogical problem. Its political and social implications are too important to be ignored. Will not the use of different native languages be a serious divisive factor in a country composed of 7,000 islands, where more than eighty vernaculars are spoken? Will it not set back the objective of developing a national language? Will not the supplanting of English by the local dialect impoverish the education of the less privileged?



# INDIA USES FILMS IN FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION

by WINIFRED HOLMES

INDIA's most cherished aims—to raise her standard of living, to become self-supporting in food and to overcome her vast problem of illiteracy<sup>1</sup>—are being tackled in various ways, and not least through the medium of film.

The great potentialities of the sound film in this matter of fundamental education have been realised for some time and the way in which Russia overcame similar problems largely through the medium of film and radio—problems of unification, of understanding of modern methods and scientific ideas—before the mass of the people could read, have been studied and their lessons learnt.

The wartime Government Film Unit, Information Films of India, set up to make films about the war effort, soon abandoned that aspect of its work and chose instead subjects which provided a general background of liberal education for the ordinary, usually unlettered, people who crowd the two and four-anna seats in the city cinemas. These ten-minute documentary shorts were not educational in the strict sense. They did not set out to teach one aspect of a certain subject to be used in formal or social education. They were made for use in public cinemas, which always included them in their programmes, and had therefore to be in some measure entertaining and of wide general interest. What they did do was to bring people, limited to one part of their large country by economic necessity and lack of access to reading matter, a wider vision and understanding of the men and women of their own land, of its tremendously varying agriculture and industries, towns and villages, rivers and sea-ports; of its physical aspects, its natural riches and its cultural heritage.

By choosing as some of their subjects the ancient arts of India—architecture, sculpture, music and the dance—these films helped to re-kindle national faith and pride in their past which owed nothing to the dominating West. India was stirring into a great new sense of nationhood and needed to bolster up her self-confidence. Some of the I.F.I. films played an important part in this renaissance.

Later films were intended to rouse a social consciousness and a conscience, and to give instruction without offence in aspects of civics, hygiene and techniques of living and working. These films were deliberately aimed at those members of the audience who had little or no education. They had to reach an audience which was taking a great leap forward out of ignorance, poverty and superstition, into a world in which the standard of living and understanding was to be raised to a far higher universal level. Conservatism, lethargy and ignorance were the chief enemies to be overcome. But how could they be overcome? How could new ways of thought, new ideas, new methods to supplant those held and employed for hundreds of years be put over effectively in a few hundred feet of film? How could this be done without giving offence? How could it be done convincingly?

Those were the questions, the problems, that I.F.I. had to face when it made its films on Infant Welfare, on Soil Erosion, on Locusts, on Food Storage

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1. The latest official illiteracy figures are 85% of the population.

and Preservation, etc. It was found that direct propaganda was not appreciated by the general town audience, paying for their seats in the cinema and going there to see their favourite stars and to enjoy their songs and dances. Informative films, provided they are not too dry, but contain humour and have a musical background, are far better received by this type of audience. For this reason the new Government Unit, Indian Documentary Film, when making an important hygiene-teaching film, 'Dirty Habits', recently, adopted humorous ways in which to put across the evils of dirty habits like spitting and sharing the same lollipop. The film drew roars of laughter from the audience and considerable applause. Although this aroused some controversy in the press as to whether humour did not detract from the educative value of the film, the general opinion held in responsible quarters is the reverse. 'We find that humour, *specially as can be understood by the class of people to whom the film is addressed*,<sup>1</sup> is a definite help, although its application to the purely educative type, only to be shown to a selected audience, is not very much encouraged. At the same time it is felt that humour in some form or other is essential for films intended for release through the regular trade channels in theatrical circuits,' writes a member of the Films Division.

In India there are two audiences for adult education films. One is the town audience in the Indian-language cinemas, most of whom are illiterate and need help in gaining a new understanding as much as their rural brothers and sisters. Many of them are mill and factory workers or casual labourers, with a recent village background and its narrow outlook. But their ardent film-going soon accustoms them to film conventions and it is not necessary to give them their film-lessons in slow tempo. The commentary must be, of course, in their own language. I.D.F. are making their ten-minute shorts for this theatrical market in Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Bengali and English. They are always simple commentary films and so dubbing presents no problems. Here are some recent films of a social-instructional nature made for this market. 'Fright and Prejudice' describes the different varieties of Indian snakes and contains practical lessons for effectively neutralizing the effects of snake-bite. It debunks many of the commonly-held beliefs and superstitions concerning snakes and shows how 'more harm befalls man through panic than poisoning'. 'Blossoms Revived', about polio, is a human story in which a mother's courage saved her daughter's life with the help of the skill and devotion of doctors and nurses. The aim of the film is to show how people themselves can help patients and assist medical science in its work. 'Planned Parenthood' is a courageous film which informs the people of the crushing burden of population increase of over five million people per year. It is explained that by limiting the size of families a better chance can be given to the children for a useful and happy life.

In addition, I.D.F. are continuing I.F.I.'s policy of showing the country to the country by making films on its industries, railways, irrigation projects, construction and rehabilitation, its economic problems and its sources of national pride, such as the new Indian Constitution.

The second audience for adult education films is the village audience—by far the larger of the two. Films for this audience are being made by a special unit of Indian Documentary Film, by the Provincial Governments' film units and by a few enlightened industrialists through the medium of independent documentary producing companies. They are shown by means of mobile cinema vans which tour the countryside and villagers will walk miles to attend a performance.

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1. The italics are mine.



Through experience various lessons have been learnt in how to make such films effective for this audience.

1. Cartoon is understood and enjoyed.
2. Clown humour is immediately appreciated and strikes home.
3. The necessity for slow tempo has not been proved, as the 'grammar of the film' is very soon grasped. Indians have a long tradition of theatrical convention and story-telling of a subtle nature and they have a well-developed visual sense.
4. The Indian illiterate villager is an adult and must be treated as such. His scope is narrow, but within it he is shrewd and quick-witted and must not be talked down to.
5. Films for this audience are best made by fellow nationals as it is only Indians who can really understand the attitude of mind, the long cherished ideas, handed down for generations, and the religious convictions of their fellows.
6. A tactful approach to new ideas is essential. Although the moral can be driven home hard and dramatically the people shown in the film who hold the old ideas must not be made fun of. Respect for age and tradition is innate and must be taken into account in planning the film.
7. The audience must be put in a good humour in the first few feet of the film. Otherwise it may put up a resistance to the message of the picture. Rural audiences are quick to laugh and enjoy laughing.
8. The story must be simple and told about the kind of people the villager knows. It should be told simply and straightforwardly with a friendly and conversational commentary which will bring him right into the orbit of the film.
9. When making a film of village life the people themselves can make valuable contributions to it if approached in the right way. When 'Kurvandi Road' was made—a film about how a village needed, asked for and got a road which they helped construct themselves, to the advantage of the whole community—the director interested the people of Kurvandi so much in the film that they themselves suggested angles of thought and approach which were stronger and had more bite to them than he had thought of before or would have dared to suggest.
10. The script-writer must base the motivation of the film on the deep-seated aims and cherished ambitions of the village folk; i.e. to have sons, to pay their way, to marry their daughters well. Appeals to such emotions never fail. An outstanding example of this can be seen in the film 'A Tiny Thing Brings Death'. This is the story of two young villagers and their wives who live in a malaria infested part of watery Bengal. One of them sickens with the dread fever and carries it home to his pregnant wife. 'This is the will of God,' they say and they cannot believe the doctor who tells them malaria is caused by a tiny insect and can be prevented by taking a certain drug regularly which can be bought cheaply in the bazaar. Romesh, strong, fine young peasant, dies; his wife, weakened by malaria, gives birth to a dead child. She has lost everything. Romesh's friend, who tells the tale, is overcome with sorrow and he is afraid for his own wife who is also pregnant and who complains of fever. He runs to the doctor and obtains some of the medicine and at last believes in the truth of the new scientific knowledge of malaria, its prevention and cure. The film ends on a happier note of the proud father-to-be striding off to work in the fields and dreaming of the strapping son who will one day walk there with him. The commentary is in the first person singular; there is no dialogue, so that different language versions of the film can be made.

The 'Rural Special' films made by I.D.F. are in four languages—Hindi

(Hindustani), Gujarati, Tamil and Bengali. The language problem is not nearly as difficult a one in India as is generally supposed. Hindi is becoming a universal language, of which many of the vernaculars are only dialects. A more difficult problem lies in the variety of conditions obtaining in rural areas in different parts of such a vast country. Agricultural methods are of necessity completely different—although they may be equally primitive—in the dry upland of the Deccan from those of the wet Malabar coast. Customs, both social and personal, are quite different in Bengal from customs in the Punjab. It is easily seen that to make a film universally acceptable in all parts of India is not easy. In fact, it is practically impossible, except in a very few cases. It is possible, therefore, that the Provincial Governments will gradually take over more and more of the making of films for fundamental education in their area. At present they have little money to spare, but this would be a logical development when finances are available.



# NOTES AND RECORDS

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## READING FOR ENJOYMENT

A correspondent, Mr. Albert de la Court, of Wassenaar, Holland, has analysed the Unesco booklet *Fundamental education: description and programme* and considers that one important point in literacy work has been missed:

'Literacy teaching is seen as "a means, not an end"; in a general way this statement is right, but it appears too simple. For children who begin to master the skills of reading and writing, these techniques are indeed ends in themselves. It is the teacher who knows that this reading and writing business has an educational purpose which will become clearer in the future—but he is anxious not to put this far-off purpose too soon before the children.

Knowing that reading means at least: reading something, he tries to convince the children that reading is *worth while*. He supplies them with reading for enjoyment. This method is based on the psychology of the child, not on that of the teacher, and it offers the best way to get results.'

Fundamental education with adults, Mr. de la Court goes on, meets with certain resistances because it threatens a known way of life. This is especially true in literacy campaigns. 'The people are aware that many things are going wrong in their community, but if ever they come to enquire into the causes it is very seldom the community that is guilty, but nature: erosion of the soil is caused by too heavy rains and nothing can be done about it. As we know, literacy is a valuable means for changing this complex, but to the people themselves reading is unnecessary (they never feel the lack of it), remote (they work mostly with their hands), and suspicious (the old way of living may change, without any guarantee that the new will be any better). The learner also risks losing face if the course proves too difficult. The situation is thus that adults will not be willing to consider reading as an end in itself; but at the end of the spelling course (i.e. the literacy primer) they are technically and mentally still far from accepting "the" purpose of any reading: reading for learning. So I think it would be a good method to use fully the intermediate function of reading for enjoyment.'

The writer feels that too much attention is paid to the edifying aspects of follow-up reading matter. 'A motive to read has to be created', and this is best achieved by making books an attractive pastime. More serious matters can come with fluency in reading, when the habit is acquired.

## LITERACY CAMPAIGNS IN THE SUDAN

The following notes have been extracted from a roneo-ed circular of the Institute of Education, Bakht er Ruda, Ed Dueim:

'Experiments in mass literacy work have been carried out in four different environments during 1949. The different circumstances provided chances for using primers with diverse types of illiterates and raised points of organization which would apply to many parts of the country. The number enrolled in these campaigns reached 1,755; of these, over 1,400 attained a standard of literacy which meant passing a simple test on Primer 2... There have been

some differences in success between one place and another. At Hasaheisa, for example, only a small percentage of literates resulted from the campaign. This was largely due to the failure of volunteer teachers to stay the course, which in itself was partly caused by local difficulties of transport, of rival attractions in the town and partly by the failure of the organizer to develop adequate enthusiasm. In Dueim, Um Gerr, the Gezira and Barakat results were much more encouraging. About 80% of those starting gained certificates.

Campaigns lasted from 2½ months to 3½ months each. A follow-up campaign was embarked on in October; but before starting it an attempt was made to find out whether new literates had been able to maintain their knowledge. The result was that while 60% managed to maintain their standard, and 15% showed some improvement, the remaining 25% were gradually slipping back to illiteracy after a seven or eight months' break.

The concluding remarks of the author, Hassan Eff. Ahmed Youssif, contain interesting pointers for the future: 'Usually the desire of the illiterates to be taught is more than the response of those who volunteer to teach... Success depends to a large extent on the spirit of the local committees. Wherever these were able to appreciate their responsibilities, to assume their task with energy, the results have been gratifying... There is much to be learnt in the art of propaganda to persuade the better educated section of the community to take an active interest in the campaigns... The overwhelming extent of illiteracy, especially in small villages, is a serious handicap for the each-one-teach-one method.'

#### FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION MAKES GOOD

It is pleasant to record that the British Crown Film Unit's documentary *Daybreak in Udi* (referred to in E.R. Chadwick's article in this bulletin, July 1949) has won a Hollywood award 'for the best feature-length documentary of the year'. The dramatic possibilities of community development are well known to some people—mainly the field workers—but little exploited in the film, press, radio world.

#### UNESCO ACTIVITIES: SEMINARS

During the summer four international seminars are being held, along the following lines: in Canada, on the teaching of geography; in Belgium, on history textbooks and steps that can be taken to improve them; in Sweden, on the rôle of libraries in adult education; in Austria, on methods and techniques of adult education. The emphasis in the first two is naturally on better international understanding; the third and fourth serve a similar purpose but are more technical in content.

#### UNESCO PUBLICATIONS

A recent book, *International Directory of Adult Education*, contains a survey of 37 countries and a number of international agencies. For each country a general statement is given, followed by an annotated list of the main organizations and agencies. The *Directory* should prove a useful reference work in libraries; and those studying adult education or running programmes will find that it suggests a number of contacts with people in other countries. The *Directory* is at present in draft, multilith form. Copies may be obtained free from the Education Clearing House, for as long as supplies last.



The campaign has been in progress for six months. A government circular of October 1949 requested the principals of schools not to 'refuse admission' to any child. When the principals had filled all vacant places in the best way possible, they entered on a waiting list the names of pupils who could not be admitted. The families were then informed that their children had not been refused, but placed on the list for possible later admission.

Evening courses have been organized for these children, so that they might obtain at least a rudimentary schooling.

At present there are 71 such courses, with an enrolment of 29,211 (because of the special nature of the work, the attendance is not included in the statistics of the public primary schools for which enrolment stood at 113,222 on 15 October 1949). Shortage of premises has led to an abbreviated timetable for the literacy courses: 16 or 18 hours per week instead of the 30 hours of the primary school. Teaching is devoted to the three R's in French or in Arabic.

In addition, an 'Association for Literacy Campaigns among the Tribes' was set up during 1949, with the approval of the Tunisian Government. The Association is now laying the plans for its future activities.

Finally, adult courses have developed in the urban areas; they have an enrolment of about 3,000, drawn chiefly from the working classes and containing a large proportion of illiterates. Teaching is in French and Arabic and averages 3 to 4 hours a week (6 for some courses) according to the locality. The content is language, reading, writing and arithmetic.

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